

Message Text

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ORIGIN EA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 SNM-02 INR-05 CIAE-00 NSC-05

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DRAFTED BY EA/TB:CLSTERMER:LRR

APPROVED BY S/NM - AMBASSADOR VANCE

EA/TB - MR. ROBERTS

S/NM - MR. RAFFERTY

DEA - MR. YATES

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R 291912Z OCT 74

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

INFO AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 237242

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SNAR, TH

SUBJECT: BPP SEIZURE OF OPIUM

FROM VANCE

REF: BANGKOK 16657

1. I WOULD LIKE TO EXTEND MY PERSONAL CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE LATEST SEIZURE OF OPIUM REPORTED REFTEL. THE RESOURCEFULNESS AND COURAGEOUS CONDUCT OF THE SMALL BPP FORCE UNDER COMMAND OF COLONEL PHAIROTE IN A DIFFICULT SITUATION IS PARTICULARLY COMMENDABLE AND SHOULD SERVE AS A SOURCE OF PRIDE TO ALL CONCERNED.

2. WE NOTED THAT A FIREFIGHT OCCURRED WHICH, TO OUR RECOLLECTION, IS THE FIRST TIME THAT CARAVAN GUARDS HAVE ACTUALLY RESISTED AN INTERDICTION OPERATION. THIS MAY
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PROVE TO BE AN ISOLATED INSTANCE, BUT IT MAY ALSO BE A

PRECURSOR OF HOW CARAVAN LEADERS CAN BE EXPECTED TO REACT AS PRESSURES AGAINST THEIR LIVELIHOOD STEP UP. YOUR COMMENTS ON THIS INTERPRETATION WOULD BE APPRECIATED.

3. WE ALSO NOTED (PARA 4 REFTTEL) REFERENCE TO A LACK OF HELICOPTERS IN GETTING THE BPP RELIEF FORCE INTO THE SEIZURE SITE. AS YOU KNOW, TWO NEW HELICOPTERS RECENTLY

ASSIGNED TO THE TNPD AIR DIVISION WERE SUPPOSED TO BE AVAILABLE AT ALL TIMES FOR THIS KIND OF MISSION. WE ASSUME THIS SITUATION IS BEING INVESTIGATED.

4. FINALLY, THE REFERENCE TO A DEA AGENT AT THE SEIZURE SITE HOPEFULLY MEANS THAT HE WAS NOT INVOLVED IN THE FIREFIGHT. WE RECOGNIZE THAT THE PRESENCE OF AGENTS IS RATIONALIZED IN TERMS OF MOTIVATING THEIR THAI COUNTER-PARTS. DELICATE BALANCE, HOWEVER, MUST BE MAINTAINED BETWEEN ENSURING RESULTS, ENDANGERING THE LIVES OF U.S. PERSONNEL, AND JEOPARDIZING OUR ENTIRE PROGRAM AS A RESULT OF THE UNFAVORABLE PUBLICITY WHICH COULD BE GENERATED BY AN AMERICAN OFFICER'S KILLING OR WOUNDING A LOCAL NATIONAL. INGERSOLL

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